

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ A mechanical rail vehicle coupling comprising an optical signal coupling for two vehicles coupled with one another, especially rail vehicles coupled with one another, with a first coupling part directly configured to be fixed to one rail vehicle and a second coupling part directly configured to be fixed to the other rail vehicle, between which optical signals are transmitted, characterized in that wherein the first coupling part contains a sending device which creates the optical signals to be transmitted, and the second coupling part contains a receiving device which detects the transmitted optical signals, the coupling parts being arranged in coupling heads of the mechanical rail vehicle coupling.

Claims 2-9 (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) An optical signal coupling for two vehicles coupled with one another, especially rail vehicles coupled with one another, with a first coupling part fixed to one vehicle and a second coupling part fixed to the other vehicle, between which optical signals are transmitted, the first coupling part containing a sending device which creates the optical signals to be transmitted, and the second coupling part containing a receiving device which detects the transmitted optical signals;

the first and second coupling parts each being a light conducting element of which elements one has a spherically concave end surface and the other has a spherically convex end surface with an identical radius of curvature and of which at least one is so elastically biased that the light conducting elements are pressed against one another with their end surfaces when the two vehicles are coupled with one another, the light conducting elements each including a light opaque sleeve and a transparent core received in the sleeve, the light opaque

sleeves being electrically conducting and in that upon the pressing together of the end surfaces the light conducting elements of the first and second coupling parts establish an electrical contact between the associated sleeves through which electric signals from one coupling part can be transmitted to the other coupling part.

11. (Original) An optical signal coupling according to claim 10, wherein the section of each sleeve which is part of the end surfaces is plated with hard gold.

12. (Original) An optical signal coupling according to claim 10, wherein at least a portion of the signal which is transmitted between the coupling parts as an optical signal is additionally transmitted through the sleeves of the two coupling parts as an electric signal.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) An optical signal coupling according to claim 10, wherein between the sleeve of the light conducting element and the sleeve-like section of the housing of each coupling part an electrical sliding contact exists through which electric signals are transmittable between the sleeve-like section and the sleeve.

Claims 15 and 16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ An automatic rail vehicle coupling comprising a conductive coupling for the connection of conductors of two rail vehicles couplable with one another, with two contact carriers each of which is configured to be connected to a respective one of the rail vehicles, wherein at least one signal coupling part with a sending device is arranged in one contact carrier and in that at least one signal coupling part with a receiving device is arranged in the other contact carrier which coupling parts together form an optical signal coupling according to claim 1. carrier, the sending device being configured for creating optical signals to be transmitted, and the receiving device being configured for detecting the transmitted optical signals.

Claims 18 and 19 (Canceled)